

of games are played throughout the summer months at various levels of competition. These events bring together children from the international community and foster principles that transcend cultural or regional differences.

Since the very first game was played on June 6, 1939, Little League International has made an invaluable contribution to the lives of millions of children across the globe. I wish Little League International all the best as it continues to grow and fulfill its mission by laying a strong foundation for today's youth.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### CONGRAULATING SOUTHEAST ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

• Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to the hard work of the students and faculty of the Southeast Island School District, their local community members, and their Superintendent, Lauren Busch.

In response to high food costs, the school district sought funding and community support to build greenhouses for students at each of its four schools: Thorne Bay, Coffman Cove, Naukat, and Barry Stewart. Students and community members found funding, purchased and constructed greenhouses and are now using locally sourced biomass to heat them.

While building a few greenhouses may not sound like much to those in the lower 48, things are different in Alaska. High transportation costs, high energy costs, the lack of access to raw materials, and sometimes severe weather all combine to make for a high cost of living. This makes this district-wide greenhouse project a tremendous achievement.

A central part of my job is to explain how different Alaska is to my colleagues here and to help them understand these high costs our Alaska communities face. These are the central challenges of our State and, in one project, have been smartly and creatively addressed through the Southeast Island School District greenhouse program. In addition, the program also teaches students many other valuable skills, including entrepreneurship.

I am proud to congratulate these hard-working and resourceful Alaskans and I wish them continued success.●

##### VAN BUREN COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deep-

ly gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Van Buren County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than \$13 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together is the success that the Van Buren County Hospital has had in securing funds for wellness activities and facilities expansions through programs I fought for as chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

Among the highlights:

**Main Street Iowa:** One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like Bonaparte to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Van Buren County has earned \$55,000 through this program. These grants build much more than buildings. They build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

**School grants:** Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than \$132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tre-

mendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Van Buren County has received \$2,722,823 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Van Buren County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling \$144,729.

**Agricultural and rural development:** Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Van Buren County has received more than \$5 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

**Keeping Iowa communities safe:** I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Van Buren County's fire departments have received over \$2,000,000 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

**Wellness and health care:** Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Van Buren County has recognized this important issue by securing more than \$350,000 in grants for community wellness activities.

**Disability Rights:** Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. However, I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I